



*Maine State Legislature  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0002*

June 3, 2013

Maine Turnpike Authority  
ATTN: Peter Mills, Executive Director  
2360 Congress Street  
Portland, ME 04102

Dear Director Mills,

We are writing to express our support for the letter the Legislature's Transportation Committee sent directing the Maine Turnpike Authority to report back to the committee on every turnpike-related bill that was considered this session. This is an important step that the Authority must take to deliver solutions to the problems the bills attempted to address.

As always, the greatest concern for the Lewiston-Auburn delegation is ensuring that the cost burden for all Turnpike users be equally shared. We would urge the authority to consider that factor in all future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Margaret Craven  
State Senator

John Cleveland  
State Senator

Michael Carey  
State Representative

Michel Lajoie  
State Representative

Wayne Werts  
State Representative

Michael Beaulieu  
State Representative

Margaret Rotundo  
State Representative

Nate Libby  
State Representative

Brian Bolduc  
State Representative

Paul Gilbert  
State Representative

Gary Knight  
State Representative

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State of Maine  
ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

May 30, 2013

Peter Mills, Executive Director  
Maine Turnpike Authority  
2360 Congress Street  
Portland, ME 04102

Dear Mr. Mills:

Earlier this session, the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation held public hearings and work sessions on several bills relating to the Maine Turnpike Authority (MTA), including but not limited to, the following.

- LD 569, Resolve, To Study the Impact of Higher Maine Turnpike Tolls on Workers, Businesses and Economic Development (sponsor: Representative Bolduc of Auburn)
- LD 588, An Act To Abolish the Maine Turnpike Authority and Transfer Its Functions and Duties to the Department of Transportation (Representative Carey of Lewiston)
- LD 621, An Act To Change the Tolling on the Maine Turnpike (Representative Parry of Arundel)  
This bill proposed to direct MTA to discontinue all toll facilities on the turnpike except for 6 toll collection facilities at the following locations: in the Town of York at mile 7.3; upon exit from the turnpike at the Interstate 295 interchange in the City of Portland at mile 44.3; upon exit from the turnpike at the Interstate 295 interchange in the Town of Falmouth at mile 51.3; in the Town of New Gloucester at mile 67; in the Town of West Gardiner at mile 100.2; and at the Interstate 295 interchange in the City of Gardiner at mile 103.
- LD 818, Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation and the Maine Turnpike Authority To Assess the Effects of Funding and Policy Decisions on the Maine Turnpike and I-295 between Portland and Augusta (Representative Bolduc of Auburn)  
This resolve proposed to require the Department of Transportation and MTA to study the funding models, policy, interchange location decisions and long-term cost-of-living, land use and economic effects of tolls for the section of the turnpike from Exit 44 to Exit 113 and of I-295 between Portland and Augusta.
- LD 1382, An Act To Provide Toll Discounts to Maine Commuters on the Maine Turnpike  
This bill proposed to amend the laws governing the establishment of the rates of tolls on the Maine Turnpike. It proposed to restore the law that was repealed requiring that the system of commuter discounts established by MTA provide passenger vehicles with reduced rates that do not exceed 50% of the normal passenger vehicle toll. It proposed to require that the rate of toll be based on

the number of vehicle miles traveled. Finally, it proposed to require that, prior to implementing toll revisions, the authority must submit its proposed revisions to the Transportation Committee.

Obviously, the recent toll increase implemented by MTA effective November 1, 2012 has generated considerable discussion and has resulted in the introduction of several bills this session relating to the toll structure of the MTA. Although the Transportation Committee voted unanimously "ought not to pass" on all of the bills listed (LDs 569, 588, 621 and 1382) except for one (LD 818), we share many of the concerns expressed by the sponsors of these bills and their constituents.

The Transportation Committee understands that there are valid reasons why the current toll structure is inherently inequitable. For example, there is no toll assessed on a section of the turnpike between Sabattus and Auburn. Yet, we hear from the Lewiston-Auburn delegation and their constituents that they are paying exorbitant amounts in comparison to others who travel similar distances on the turnpike. We have heard testimony that different rates are charged for northbound traffic compared to southbound traffic. A commuter driving from Wells to West Gardiner is charged \$5 while driving the same route from West Gardiner to Wells costs \$3.50, for example.

Ideally, other than minimum tolls, all turnpike users should pay the same rate for the number of miles traveled. Electronic toll collection on the turnpike appears to be the most efficient way to accomplish this goal and it is our understanding that the MTA Board has directed you to move toward all electronic tolling. Again, we realize that there are valid reasons why 64% of the toll revenue is collected electronically and the remaining 32% is cash toll collection.

The Transportation Committee feels that MTA should not focus on attempting to equalize electronic toll rates and cash toll rates. On the other hand, we believe, at the very least, that all Maine resident EZ Pass customers should pay the same rate per mile. Perhaps, Lewiston, Auburn and Sabattus would be a particularly good area to test the implementation of all electronic toll collection.

The Transportation Committee respectfully requests that MTA consider the merit of each of the various legislative proposals and continue to work toward the most equitable toll structure for all turnpike users. We also request that you report back to the Transportation Committee on the status of the equalization of tolls on the turnpike no later than March 1<sup>st</sup> during the Second Regular Session of the 126<sup>th</sup> Legislature.

Thank you for your efforts on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Mazurek  
Senate Chair



Charles Kenneth Theriault  
House Chair

CC: Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation  
Dan Morin, Maine Turnpike Authority